

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (Canceled)

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): A system according to Claim 11, further comprising:

analysis means for analyzing information about the trouble in the product; and

search means for searching for an operation for resolving the trouble in the product on the basis of the result of the analysis.

Claim 3 (Original): A system according to Claim 2, wherein analysis by said analysis means is performed on the side of a user using the product.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): A system according to Claim 2, further comprising notice means for sending a notice of a cost or a time required for the operation.

Claim 5 (Original): A system according to Claim 2, further comprising:

management means for managing a guarantee period of the product,

wherein said cost depends on the managed guarantee period.

Claim 6 (Original): A system according to Claim 2, further comprising:

management means for managing information about specifications of the product,

wherein analysis by said analysis means depends on the managed information about the specifications.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): A system according to Claim 11, further comprising:

storage means for storing contents of an operation actually performed to resolve the trouble in the product or results of the operation.

Claim 8 (Canceled)

Claim 9 (Canceled):

Claim 10 (Cancelled).

Claim 11. (Currently Amended) A trouble management system capable of communicating, through a network, with a customer apparatus connected to a product, or a service person's apparatus, comprising:

first receiving means for receiving, from said customer apparatus, trouble information of the product;

determining means for determining whether or not ~~a check item~~ an inquiry is necessary, on the basis of the trouble information received by said receiving means;

transmitting means for transmitting the ~~check~~ inquiry item relating to the product to said customer apparatus, if said determining means determines that the ~~check item~~ inquiry is necessary;

second receiving means for receiving, from said customer apparatus, a ~~check result~~ response which is input to said customer apparatus on the basis of the ~~check~~ inquiry item transmitted by said transmitting means; and

diagnosing means for diagnosing ~~whether or not there is a trouble with the product~~, in accordance with the ~~check result~~ response received by said second receiving means, when

~~the determining means determines that the inquiry is necessary; and~~

~~transmitting control means for effecting control to transmit, to said customer apparatus, a message indicating a plan of measures against the trouble information if said diagnosing means determined that there is no trouble with the product, and transmit, to said service person's apparatus, information indicating a service request if said diagnosing means determines that there is a trouble with the product.~~

Claim 12. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling a trouble management system capable of communicating, through a network, with a customer apparatus connected to a product, or a service person's apparatus, comprising:

a first receiving step of receiving, from said customer apparatus, trouble information of the product;

a determining step of determining whether or not ~~a check item~~ an inquiry is necessary, on the basis of the trouble information received in said first receiving step;

a transmitting step of transmitting the ~~check~~ inquiry item relating to the product to said customer apparatus, if said determining step determines that the ~~check item~~ inquiry is necessary;

a second receiving step of receiving, from said customer apparatus, a ~~check result~~ response which is input at said customer apparatus on the basis of the ~~check~~ inquiry item transmitted in said transmitting step; and

a diagnosing step of diagnosing ~~whether or not there is a trouble with the product~~, in accordance with the ~~check result~~ response received in said second receiving step, when the determining step determines that the inquiry is necessary; and

~~a transmitting control step of effecting control to transmit, to said customer apparatus, a message indicating a plan of measures against the trouble information if said diagnosing step determines that there is no trouble with the product, and transmit, to said service person's apparatus, information indicating a service request if said diagnosing step determines that there is a trouble with the product.~~

Claim 13. (Currently Amended) A storage medium storing a program for executing a process of controlling a trouble management system capable of communicating, through a network, with a customer apparatus connected to a product, or a service person's apparatus, the program storing:

a first receiving step of receiving, from said customer apparatus, trouble information of the product;

a determining ~~means~~ step of determining whether or not ~~a check item~~ an inquiry is necessary, on the basis of the trouble information received in said first receiving step;

a transmitting ~~means~~ step of transmitting the ~~check inquiry~~ item relating to the product to said customer apparatus, if said determining step determines that the ~~check item~~ inquiry is necessary;

a second receiving step of receiving, from said customer apparatus, a ~~check result~~ response which is input at said customer apparatus on the basis of the ~~check inquiry~~ item transmitted in said transmitting step; and

a diagnosing step of diagnosing ~~whether or not there is a trouble with the product~~, in accordance with the ~~check result~~ response received in said second receiving step, when the

~~determining step determines that the inquiry is necessary; and~~

~~a transmitting control step of effecting control to transmit, to said customer apparatus, a message indicating a plan of measures against the trouble information if said diagnosing step determines that there is no trouble with the product, and transmit, to said service person's apparatus, information indicating a service request if said diagnosing step determines that there is a trouble with the product.~~

Claim 14. (New) A system according to claim 11, further comprising:

diagnosis possibility determining means for determining whether or not a diagnosis is possible;

additional determination means for determining whether or not a further inquiry is necessary, if the diagnosis possibility determining means determines that the diagnosis is not possible; and

additional transmission means for transmitting a further inquiry item to the customer apparatus, if the additional determination means determines that the further inquiry is necessary.